

chicago footnotes for art history images

Art History Image Citations: The Chicago Style Footnote Approach

chicago footnotes for art history images are a crucial component of academic integrity and scholarly research in the visual arts. Properly citing the source of an image not only acknowledges the original creator and publisher but also allows readers to locate the artwork and verify the information presented. This comprehensive guide delves into the intricacies of applying Chicago style footnotes to art history imagery, covering everything from basic principles to advanced considerations. Understanding how to accurately attribute these visual assets is paramount for students, researchers, and curators, ensuring that their work is both credible and ethical. We will explore the essential elements of a Chicago footnote for an image, discuss common scenarios, and provide practical advice for navigating the complexities of image citation.

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Understanding the Purpose of Image Citations

The primary purpose of citing art history images is to give credit where credit is due. This involves recognizing the artist's labor, the photographer's skill, and the institution or publication that made the image accessible. Without proper attribution, an image can be misidentified, its provenance obscured, and its intellectual property rights violated. In art historical discourse, images are not merely illustrations; they are primary evidence and subjects of analysis. Therefore, their origins must be meticulously documented.

Beyond ethical considerations, accurate citation is fundamental for scholarly reproducibility. When an art historian discusses a particular artwork, the ability for a reader to find the exact image being referenced is vital for critical engagement and further research. This involves providing enough information so that the image can be located with minimal ambiguity, even if the original link or publication goes out of print or is archived.

Core Components of a Chicago Style Footnote for Art

History Images

Chicago style, in its various editions, emphasizes clarity and completeness in citations. For art history images, several key pieces of information are consistently required, regardless of the source medium. These components ensure that the image is identifiable and its origin traceable.

Essential Information for Image Citations

A robust Chicago style footnote for an art history image will generally include the following elements:

- Artist's name (if known and relevant to the image itself)
- Title of the artwork (italicized)
- Date of the artwork (creation date)
- Medium of the artwork (e.g., oil on canvas, bronze)
- Dimensions of the artwork
- Current location of the artwork (museum, gallery, private collection)
- Photographer's credit (if different from the artwork's creator and significant)
- Title of the book, website, or publication where the image was found
- Publisher and publication date of the source
- Page number or specific URL where the image appears
- Copyright information or accession number (if available)

Basic Footnote Format for Art History Images

The fundamental structure of a Chicago style footnote involves presenting the detailed information about the source in a narrative paragraph, typically separated by commas. The first footnote entry for a source will be more comprehensive, while subsequent entries may be shortened. However, for image citations, it is often beneficial to retain as much detail as possible even in subsequent notes to ensure clarity.

For example, a basic footnote might look like this: Artist's Name, Title of Artwork, Year of Creation, Medium, Dimensions, Location, photographer's credit (if applicable), in Title of Publication, Year of Publication, page number or URL.

Citing Images from Books

Books are a common source for art history images. When citing an image found in an art history textbook, monograph, or exhibition catalogue, the citation needs to accurately reflect the book's publication details and the specific page where the image is located.

Structure for Book Citations

The standard format for citing an image from a book using Chicago style footnotes is as follows:

1. Artist's Full Name, Title of Artwork, Year of Creation, Medium, Dimensions, Location.
2. If the image itself is a photograph of the artwork, include photographer's credit, e.g.,
Photograph by John Smith.
3. If the source is a book, then provide the title of the book in italics: In *Title of Book*, edited by Editor's Name (if applicable), Publication Year: Publisher, Page Number where image appears.

For instance:

1. Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, c. 1503–1506, oil on poplar panel, 77 cm × 53 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photograph by Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York.
2. Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, c. 1503–1506, oil on poplar panel, 77 cm × 53 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photograph by Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York, in *The Italian Renaissance: Painting and Sculpture*, by John White, 1993: Prentice Hall, fig. 12.

Citing Images from Websites

The proliferation of online resources has made citing images from websites increasingly common. It is crucial to provide enough information to allow the reader to find the image, even if website structures change. This often includes the specific URL and the date the website was accessed.

Website Citation Elements

When citing an image found on a website, the following information should be included:

- Artist's Name, Title of Artwork, Year of Creation, Medium, Dimensions, Location.
- Photographer's credit (if applicable).
- Title of the website (in italics).
- Name of the organization or institution that hosts the website.
- Specific URL of the page containing the image.

- Date of access (e.g., Accessed Month Day, Year).

Example:

1. Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 cm × 92.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photograph by Geoff V. Photograph.
2. Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 cm × 92.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photograph by Geoff V. Photograph, in MoMA Collection Online, Museum of Modern Art, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79802> (Accessed October 26, 2023).

Citing Images from Museum Collections

Museums are primary repositories for art, and their websites often provide high-quality images of their holdings. Citing these directly from a museum's online collection requires attention to the museum's specific database or online catalogue entry.

Museum Online Collection Citations

The format typically involves identifying the artwork, its creator, date, medium, and dimensions, followed by the museum's name and the direct link to the artwork's page, along with the date of access.

Example:

1. Georgia O'Keeffe, *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1*, 1932, oil on canvas, 121.9 cm × 91.4 cm, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas.
2. Georgia O'Keeffe, *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1*, 1932, oil on canvas, 121.9 cm × 91.4 cm, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas, <https://crystalbridges.org/collections/jimson-weed-white-flower-no-1/> (Accessed October 26, 2023).

Citing Images from Exhibition Catalogues

Exhibition catalogues are a rich source of scholarly essays and high-quality reproductions of artworks. The citation should acknowledge the exhibition itself, the catalogue's editors, publisher, and the specific page number.

Exhibition Catalogue Footnote Details

The structure is similar to a book citation but often emphasizes the exhibition context:

- Artist's Full Name, Title of Artwork, Year of Creation, Medium, Dimensions, Location.
- Photographer's credit (if applicable).

- In Title of Exhibition Catalogue, edited by Editor's Name, Exhibition Dates, Venue(s), Publication Year: Publisher, Page Number.

For example:

1. Frida Kahlo, The Two Fridas, 1939, oil on canvas, 173.5 cm × 173 cm, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City. Photograph by Bob N. Digital Art.
2. Frida Kahlo, The Two Fridas, 1939, oil on canvas, 173.5 cm × 173 cm, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City. Photograph by Bob N. Digital Art, in Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait, organized by Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and Museo Dolores Olmedo, Xochimilco, Mexico City, 2018: Yale University Press, p. 45.

Citing Images from Archival Sources

When dealing with historical documents, photographs, or other materials found in archives, the citation needs to be precise, including the archive's name, collection, box and file numbers, and any relevant accession or reference codes.

Archival Image Citation Format

This format requires a detailed description of the archival item:

- Description of the archival item (e.g., photograph, letter, drawing).
- Date of the archival item.
- Creator of the archival item (if known).
- Name of the Archive.
- Name of the Collection.
- Box Number, Folder Number, or other identifying information.
- Accession Number or Reference Number.

Example:

1. Photograph of the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, 1870s. Photographer unknown.
2. Photograph of the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, 1870s. Photographer unknown, New York City Department of Records and Information Services, Municipal Archives, Photography Collection, Box 10, Folder 5, Accession No. 1972.003.0012.

Handling Reproductions and Copyright

It is essential to distinguish between the original artwork and the reproduction (the photograph or digital image). The copyright for the photograph typically belongs to the photographer or the photographic agency, while the copyright for the artwork may belong to the artist's estate or be in the public domain. Always credit both the artist and the photographer when applicable.

Furthermore, users must be aware of copyright restrictions. Using an image for educational purposes (fair use) is generally permissible, but commercial use or wider distribution often requires permission and potentially a licensing fee. Always check the image source for copyright notices and usage terms.

Stylistic Variations and Best Practices

While Chicago style provides a framework, minor variations can occur based on the specific edition of the manual being followed (e.g., the 17th edition). It is always best to consult the most current edition or specific guidelines provided by your institution or publisher.

Key best practices include:

- Consistency: Apply the chosen citation style consistently throughout your work.
- Accuracy: Double-check all names, dates, titles, and locations for accuracy.
- Completeness: Include all necessary information for the reader to locate the source.
- Clarity: Ensure your citations are easy to understand and unambiguous.

The Importance of Image Metadata

Image metadata, such as embedded information about the photographer, creation date, and copyright, can be invaluable for accurate citation. When available, this information should be incorporated into your footnotes. For digital images, the URL is a critical piece of metadata that points directly to the source.

Understanding and utilizing image metadata helps prevent misattribution and provides a more comprehensive record of the image's origin. This is particularly important in the digital age where images can be easily shared and altered.

When to Cite an Image

Every time an image is used to illustrate a point, support an argument, or provide visual evidence in your academic work, it must be cited. This applies whether the image is embedded in a written paper, presented in a slideshow, or used in any other form of scholarly communication. The principle is

simple: if you didn't create it, and it's not common knowledge, you must cite it.

Failing to cite an image is considered plagiarism, a serious academic offense. Therefore, developing diligent citation habits is crucial for maintaining academic integrity and building a credible scholarly reputation. This applies to all forms of visual materials, including photographs, paintings, sculptures, architectural renderings, and digital art.

Q: What is the most critical piece of information for citing an art history image in Chicago style?

A: The most critical piece of information for citing an art history image in Chicago style is the complete and accurate identification of the artwork itself, including the artist, title, and date of creation, followed by the source from which the image was obtained, including the publication details or URL and page number/access date.

Q: Do I need to cite the photographer if the artwork is well-known?

A: Yes, you generally need to cite the photographer or the source of the photograph, even if the artwork itself is well-known. The photograph is a separate creation with its own copyright, and it is important to acknowledge the visual reproduction.

Q: How do I cite an image found on a social media platform like Instagram?

A: Citing images from social media platforms can be complex. Generally, you would include the artist (if identified), the title of the artwork, the creation date, the platform name (e.g., Instagram), the username of the account posting the image, the specific post's URL, and the date of access. However, scholarly journals may have specific guidelines against citing social media as primary sources for images.

Q: What is the difference between a footnote and a bibliography entry for an image in Chicago style?

A: In Chicago style, the footnote provides the full citation details for a specific image at its first mention, while subsequent footnotes for the same source can be shortened. The bibliography entry, appearing at the end of the document, provides a more comprehensive listing of all sources used, including images, often in a slightly different format than the footnote.

Q: How do I handle images that are in the public domain?

A: Even if an artwork is in the public domain (meaning its copyright has expired), you still need to cite

the source of the reproduction (the photograph or digital image). You should also indicate if the artwork itself is in the public domain if that information is readily available and relevant to your discussion.

Q: What if the artist's name or artwork title is not clearly visible in the image itself?

A: If the artist's name or artwork title is not clearly visible, you should consult the source where you found the image for this information. Reliable sources like museum websites, scholarly articles, or reputable art history books are essential for accurate identification. If the information is genuinely unknown, you can note that in your citation (e.g., "Artist Unknown," "Title Unknown").

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